

September 15, 1996 to implement the Conservation Reserve Program which was amended by the FAIR Act. Producers and landowners in many parts of the country are wondering what the parameters of the new program will be and this provision will spur the Department on to work out the new regulations in a timely fashion.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3900 which requires the USDA to publish its regulations governing the Conservation Reserve Program by September 1, 1996. Since its inception in 1985, the CRP has been a valuable tool for America's farmers. The CRP allows producers to protect fragile, highly erodible land from further deterioration by signing contracts to remove the land from production and place it under a managed conservation practice in exchange for fixed annual payments. While the CRP has achieved considerable reductions in wind erosion, it also provides excellent wildlife habitat for pheasants, quail, and other animals that inhabit the American plains.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the regulations governing the future of the CRP have been repeatedly delayed by the USDA. Farmers need to know all of the details of the Federal agricultural policies that affect their ability to make commonsense farm management and production decisions. For weeks I have been hopeful that the USDA would issue its policy guidelines regarding the future of the CRP so that farmers could have full knowledge of the rules that will govern their program participation before they signed up for the 7-year farm program.

Unfortunately, in the more than 3 months that have passed since the new farm bill was enacted, USDA has provided only the barest of details. While the USDA has allowed CRP contract holders to extend their contracts for an additional year, farmers have no certainty regarding the long-term future of the CRP. With the world currently experiencing a grain supply shortage, many farmers worry that the CRP will be abandoned completely. At the same time, others worry that continuing to extend the CRP on a year-to-year basis discourages farmers from doing what they do best—feed a hungry and troubled world.

Mr. Speaker, farmers need long-term guidance from the USDA so they can make crucial production decisions. The new farm bill required that the USDA publish its CRP regulations within 90 days of passage—they are already 2 weeks past that deadline. With farmers already preparing to plant next year's wheat crop this fall, it is important that they know what the CRP rules will be both for next year and for the years to come.

The CRP debate has dragged on for long enough. America's farmers deserved an answer long before now. They should not have to wait any longer.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

□ 1315

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TORKILDSEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 3900

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Sec. 1 Increased Planting Flexibility.—Section 118 of the Agricultural Market Transition Act (7 U.S.C. 7218) is amended by adding the following new paragraph to subsection (b)(2):

“(D) by a producer on contract acreage following a crop that fails due to conditions beyond the producer's control.”.

Sec. 2. Conforming Amendment.—Subsection 118(b)(2) is amended:

(a) in paragraph (B), by striking “or”; and
(b) in clause (ii) of paragraph (C), by striking “vegetable.” and inserting “vegetable; or”.

Sec. 3. Conservation Reserve Program Regulations.—Not later than September 15, 1996, the Secretary shall issue regulations to implement the Conservation Reserve Program (16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.), as amended by section 332 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-127, April 4, 1996).

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. COMBEST

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TORKILDSEN). The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. COMBEST:

On page 2 Line 7 strike “in” and insert “at the end of”.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I would just mention this is strictly technical. It is to further clarify in the amendment a misinterpretation that had been earlier made, and it is purely technical and clarifying in nature.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COMBEST].

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3900.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 488.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. SCHROEDER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

STATUS REPORT ON THE CURRENT LEVELS OF ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997 AND FOR THE 5-YEAR PERIOD FISCAL YEAR 1997 THRU FISCAL YEAR 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, to facilitate application of sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, I am transmitting a status report on the current levels of on-budget spending and revenues for fiscal year 1997 and for the 5-year period fiscal year 1997 through fiscal year 2001.

The term “current level” refers to the amounts of spending and revenues estimated for each fiscal year based on laws enacted or awaiting the President's signature as of July 22, 1996.

The first table in the report compares the current level of total budget authority, outlays, and revenues with the aggregate levels set by House Concurrent Resolution 178, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1997. These levels are consistent with the recent revisions made pursuant to section 606(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 as amended by the Contract with America Advancement Act—Public Law 204-121—which provides additional new budget authority